A

DIALOGUE

Between a New

Catholic Convert

AND A

PROTESTANT,

Shewing the DOCTRIN of

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

To be as Réaſonable to be Believ'd as the

GREAT MYSTERY

OF THE

TRINITY

By all Good Catholicks.

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A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A New Catholic Convert, AND A PROTESTANT,

Concerning the Doctrins of the

Trinity and *Tranſubſtantiation.*

A. YOU cannot imagin how much I am overjoy'd to ſee you. I have been big with Diſcourſe theſe three days for want of utterance. You may remember, when we talk'd together laſt, we parted in a Diſpute concerning Tranſubſtantiation and the Holy Trinity, of their equal Reaſonableneſs and Authority. I muſt confeſs I was not at that time ſo thorowly arm'd with Reaſons to ſhew you the Parallel: but ſince I have given my ſelf a little leiſure to conſider of it, and I am perſuaded I ſhall be able to give you ſatisfaction.

B. Sir, you know I am always glad of any Opportunity to gain your good Company, but eſpecially upon ſo good an Occaſion. I'le aſſure you, I am not, nor ever was, an Enemy to Catholic Communion; and if I had not too juſt a Cauſe, I ſhould never ſuffer my ſelf in that which without reaſonable Grounds might be call'd a wilful Schiſm.

A. I have no reaſon to doubt your Integrity, and therefore ſhall not queſtion that: I ſhall only deſire the liberty to preſs my old Argu-

ment, That you would relie on the Authority of the Church. I muſt confeſs, you have often queſtion'd the doing of it; but I am ſure, when you ſhall conſider there are Myſteries as well as Doctrins in the Chriſtian Religion, and when you know that Myſteries are not to be fathom'd by Natural Reaſon, you muſt needs conclude, that in ſome Caſes your ſafeſt way is to truſt Tradition. Now certainly no one can give us ſo good an Account of That, as the Church.

B. But, Sir, to be ſhort; What relation has this to the preſent Parallel of the Trinity and Tranſubſtantiation? The Authority of the Church is another Point as diſputable as That.

A. Very much: For as theſe two Doctrins have equal ground from Scripture, Reaſon, and Tradition; ſo is there the ſame Obligation of your receiving one, as well as the other. And indeed I have ſince wonder'd at my own Profeſſion, while a Proteſtant, to think how blind and partial I was: But I muſt confeſs, becauſe we are in a Diſpute, it is better laying by ſuch aggravating Circumſtances; and indeed I cannot but be ſenſible what Prejudices ſuch Diſcourſes always make, and therefore I ſhall ſpeak nothing more of that nature.

B. But to return to the main Point; I muſt tell you, I do not think them equally grounded on Scripture, Reaſon, or Tradition; and indeed you may remember that was the old Point in diſpute with us.

A. Well, Sir, to ſhew you your Error, I ſhall begin with the ſeveral Particulars in their Order; and ſo, firſt, as to the Tradition of Tranſubſtantiation. Now 'tis evident That has been deliver'd with leſs interruption than that of the Holy Trinity: That Myſtery was queſtion'd in the very Infancy of the Church; nay, not only ſo, but the *Arians* prevail'd much againſt it about the beginning of the Fourth Age. On the other ſide, Tranſubſtantiation lay unqueſtion'd and quiet a long time; and when it came to debate, there was no ſuch oppoſition as that of *Arius*, to call in queſtion the Authority of its Tradition; the Church receiv'd it unanimouſly, and in that ſenſe continu'd, till raſh Reaſon attempted to fathom the unlimited Miracles and Myſteries of God.

B. But the Fathers are not half ſo expreſs in the Doctrin of Tranſubſtantiation, as they are in the Myſtery of the Holy Trinity.

A. That's true, and there's very good Reaſon for it: Tranſubſtantiation has not been a Doctrin ſo long in diſpute, and 'tis not cuſtomary for Men to argue unqueſtionable Truths. And whereas you may think that Tranſubſtantiation has of late receiv'd ſuch ſhrewd Repulſes by your Books, I'le aſſure you, you forget how much the

the true Catholic Zeal deſtroys the Seeds of Hereſies. Do you think that ſo many Biſhops, not only of the Eaſtern, but of the Weſtern Church alſo, could be *Arians*, and yet ſuppoſe that that Opinion wanted as plauſible a Pretence of Tradition? Certainly if you conſider that, you cannot think to eſtabliſh the Doctrin of the Trinity by Tradition, more than Tranſubſtantiation; eſpecially conſidering the ſtrong Footſteps of that Sect even in the Fathers now extant: I would cite you ſome of them, but that they are not ſo much to my main Deſign, and indeed my aim is Brevity.

B. Well, Sir, 'tis true, we cannot ſo well plead Tradition to what you have urg'd; and eſpecially when I call to mind, that *Arianiſm* was confirm'd by a General Council: But we alledge an higher ground; we ſtand upon the Authority of the Scriptures, and indeed that is the true Touchſtone of all Doctrins.

A. 'Tis true, if you will follow the Catholic Church, and take the Scriptures literally, you may diſcover the Myſtery of the Holy Trinity in them; but if you once yield to Figurative Alluſions and Interpretations, the *Arians* will be as much too hard for you, as you imagin your ſelves to be for the Catholic Church. In ſhort, both Doctrins will be at a loſs, and both equally require the Authority of the Church to ſupport them.

B. O no, ſurely, the Doctrin of the Holy Trinity is more expreſs in Scriptures than ſo.

A. To ſatisfie you that what I ſay is Truth, becauſe I may repreſent the Parallel the clearer, I will perſonate an *Arian*, that Sect ſo often condemn'd by the Ancient Church, and you ſhall ſee his Plea againſt the Trinity is as fair as yours againſt Tranſubſtantiation. And becauſe this is the main Parallel, I ſhall be ſomewhat the longer, that I may give you the greater ſatisfaction.

B. I ſhall be very glad to hear what you can ſpeak to the matter.

A. Firſt then, I ſay, 'Tis highly unreaſonable to interpret that Text, 1 *John* 5. 7. That *there be Three in Heaven that bear record, and thoſe Three are One*; as likewiſe *John* 10. 30. *I and my Father are One*, literally; for if we do, we not only oppoſe Senſe and Reaſon, but we make Conſtruction directly againſt the very Scripture, *John* 10. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38. and *John* 17. 21, 22, 23. 1 *Cor.* 3. 8 And what can be urg'd more againſt us in reſpect of Tranſubſtantiation?

B. Very right, Sir, that Interpretation carries a forcible Reaſonableneſs; but the Doctrin of the Trinity do's not wholly depend upon thoſe two Proofs.

A. Right,

A. Right, it do's not; but I can give you further Demonſtration in this Parallel. A principal Ground of the Trinity is becauſe the Son is ſo often call'd God in Scripture, as *John* 1.1,2. *Rom.* 9.5.*&c.* Now if we did not comply with the Catholic Church, and make a Literal Conſtruction in this Caſe likewiſe, how ſtrangely ſhould we be confounded by thoſe Texts where this Godhead in Chriſt is declar'd to be no more than Lordſhip, and ſubordinate to the Father? as *Heb.* 1. 8, 9. 1 *Cor.* 8. 4, 5. 1 *Cor.* 15. 27, 28. *Rev.* 3. 12. and *John* 10. 35, 36.

B. But, Sir, our Saviour forgave Sins too.

A. That's true, but only by a deputed Authority. You ſee, when the Sons of *Zebbedee* petition'd him, he could not grant the final Accompliſhment of our Spiritual Warfare, that was the Father's Prerogative, *Matth.* 20.23. And tho' he is to be our Judge, yet he knows not the time, *Mark* 13.31. 1 *Tim.* 6. 15.

B. I muſt confeſs, theſe things a little ſurpriſe me; but however, I cannot think theſe neither the only Grounds that ſupport that Myſtery of the Trinity.

A. No, you are in the right; there is one ſtrong Proof more: the *making of all things viſible and inviſible* is attributed to the Son, and that expreſly, *John* 1. 3. *Heb.* 1. 10. and particularly, *Col.* 1. 16, 17, 18, 19. But yet for all that, if we do not adhere with the Catholic Church to the Literal Interpretation, we are at a loſs there too: For, firſt, 'tis plain by the reſt of the Scripture, that the Son is not our only Maker, as appears by our Creation attributed to the Father; and then if we compare thoſe Texts to *Heb.* 1. 2, 9, 10. 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. *Eph.* 3. 9. *Eph.* 4. 5, 6. 1 *Cor.* 15. 27, 28. we cannot reaſonably attribute more to the Son, than his being God's Inſtrument in the Creation.

B. But are theſe the true and only Grounds of the Doctrin of that Holy Myſtery?

A. Yes verily; for, that we are Baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, is no Argument. That were as reaſonable, if underſtood of Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, as our Spiritual Governors, as under the ſuppoſal of their being Coequal with the Father, 1 *Cor.* 10. 2. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12, 13.

B. But ſurely, Sir, the *Arians* ſhould have other Grounds to eſtabliſh their Opinions, beſides thoſe; or elſe your Parallel with Tranſubſtantiation will not be ſo demonſtrable as you conceive. Pray inform me a little further, I have a mighty deſire to underſtand a little better their Fundamental Principles.

A. To

A. To satisfie you, I shall. First, They alledge Christ represented under the Law altogether as an Angel; for Eminency call'd the Angel of the Presence, *Isa.* 63. 9. *Eccl.* 5. 6. *Gen.* 48. 16. *Num.* 20. 16. *Exod.* 23. 20, 21, 22. referr'd to 1 *Cor.* 10. 4, 5, 9. Further, they collect him to be a Created Being, from *Col.* 1. 15. *Rev.* 3. 14. *Psal.* 118. 23. *Isa.* 45. 8. *Ecclus* 1. 4, 9. *Ecclus* 24. 9. *Sap.* 6. 22, 23. And they interpret that Scripture, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, by *Acts* 13. 33. and 2 *Pet.* 1. 17. As to the Holy Ghost, they prove a vast distance between him and the Son, by *John* 16. 12, 13, 14, 15. and *John* 15. 26. Besides, they say, he is no where call'd God; and urge for the probability of their Opinion *Rev.* 12. 9. *Rev.* 20. 8. 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. For as there is an universal tempting Evil Power, so we may reasonably conclude, there may be a Good Assisting Power, without any necessity of his being God. And further, whereever in the Scriptures there is made any mention of the Three Persons, there is always declar'd an expres Gradation; as, 1 *Cor.* 12. 3, 4, 5. 2 *Cor* 13. 14. Gift and Communion from the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, Grace and Administration from the Lordship and Kingship of Christ, and Love and Operation from the Father, the Supreme God, the Original Fountain, according to *Eph.* 4. 4, 5, 6.

B. I must confess, Sir, these Opinions seem to make it necessary for us in that Doctrin too, to trust to the Authority of the Catholic Church, and I shall take time to consider a little upon them: But pray, Sir, what say you to the Reasons of the two Doctrins.

A. Really, Sir, I must tell you, I think that Parallel much the easiest. 'Tis strange new Arithmetic to a Man, to tell him, Three distinct Persons are one and the same Individual Nature, and then to call such a one the most Pure and Simple Being; and that especially when they are declar'd to have various Intellectual Powers, as appears by *John* 16. 12, 13, 14, 15. and *Mark* 13. 31. 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. *Acts* 1. 7. For my part, I cannot tell well how the Prejudice of Education could possibly digest a thing so unreasonable, were it not a Divine Mystery. I am sure, to my Carnal Reason, there may be as well Three hundred Persons in the Godhead, as Three; and I know not what can be said of Transubstantiation that is seemingly more absurd than That.

B. I must confess, Sir, I have had strange, confus'd, and surprizing Thoughts of it my self; but I always apprehended the Christian Church a sufficient Guide.

A. If you did, Sir, pray consider who that Catholic Mother is you

so

ſo obey'd; and as you have receiv'd the Trinity, ſo receive a Doctrin equally as Reaſonable, and deliver'd by Her, Tranſubſtantiation. I know the Ingenuouſneſs of your Temper, and you promis'd me at firſt not to be a wilful Schiſmatic; and therefore I have hopes my Reaſons, and your Conſideration, will be ſufficient to reduce you to Catholic Communion.

B. Sir, I ſhall conſider of it; but as yet you only talk'd to me at large: I ſhall deſire one Favour of you before we part; Pray ſtate the Parallel a little ſhorter, I ſhall the better remember it.

A. Well, Sir, I ſhall. Firſt, The Tradition of one Doctrin cannot be ſtronger than another, where both have been at leaſt equally queſtion'd. Secondly, 'Tis as reaſonable to take *This is my Body* literally, as it is to take theſe Texts *I and my Father are one God over all bleſſed for ever*, and *By him all things were made*, without reference to other Scriptures, and a Figurative Interpretation. And, laſtly, I think to Human Reaſon 'tis as equally unreaſonable, and as ſeemingly repugnant, to ſay One is Three, as it is to ſay a Body is not what it appears.

B. Very well; I ſhall deſire no more of you now: I'le only take a little time to conſider, and then you ſhall know my Mind more freely.

A. Farewell; and God give you his Holy Spirit to inſtruct you.

FINIS.